

REMARKS

Claim 17 is amended, claims 47-53 are added, and claims 27-39 are canceled herein without prejudice to their patentability. Claims 17-26 and 47-53 will be pending upon entry of this Amendment.

The specification has been revised as requested at page 2 of the Office action.

I. Response to Rejection of Claims 17-20, 24, and 25

Claim 17 is directed to a method of converting a clutch into a centrifugally assisted clutch. More specifically, claim 17, as amended, recites a method of converting a clutch comprising the steps of:

providing at least one centrifugal lever housing including a lever pivotable in the housing for applying a force to a pressure plate of the clutch;

forming an opening for the lever in the cover of the clutch;
inserting the lever in the opening; and

securing the housing to the cover

the centrifugal lever housing as secured to the cover being located in a final assembly of the cover with the pressure plate so that the lever is operatively engaged with the pressure plate and free of pivoting connection to the pressure plate.

Claim 17 as amended is unanticipated by and patentable over the references of record including U.S. Patent No. 2,038,017 (Wemp), because Wemp does not show or suggest the claimed method of converting a clutch having at least one spring mounted on a clutch cover including providing a centrifugal lever housing as secured to the cover that is located in a final assembly of the cover with a pressure plate so that a centrifugal lever is operatively engaged with the pressure plate and free of pivoting connection to the pressure plate.

Wemp discloses a clutch having a flywheel 2, a cover plate 3, a clutch pressure plate 15, and clutch springs 16. Three clutch release levers 20 (one is shown in the drawings) are connected to the pressure plate 15 by pivot pin 21 in bearing 22. Each lever 20 is attached to the cover plate 3 by a bifurcated

bracket 30 and pivots about a pin 33 in an opening 32 in the lever and the bracket. The opening 32 of the lever 20 houses a roller 35 that moves upward in the opening to allow the pin 30 (and lever 20) to move in a direction transverse to the axial direction. When the clutch is actuated and each lever 20 is pivoted to allow movement of the pressure plate 15 in the axial direction away from the flywheel 2, the lever 20 shifts downward in a direction generally transverse to the axial direction to allow the pivot pin 21 connected to the pressure plate to move with the straight line movement of the pressure plate in the axial direction. Each lever 20 has a centrifugal weight 24 that provides clutch packing pressure that is transmitted to the pressure plate through the pivot pin 21. Each lever 20 is pivotally connected to the pressure plate 15 at the pivot pin 21 that is restricted to move axially with the pressure plate.

Wemp discloses a clutch assembly with levers 20 that are pivotally connected to the pressure plate and are constrained to move axially with the pressure plate. In contrast, the method of converting of claim 1 recites that the lever be operatively engaged with the pressure plate and free of pivoting connection to the pressure plate. Accordingly, claim 17 is submitted as patentable over Wemp and the other references of record.

There is no suggestion for modifying Wemp to remove the pivoting connection to the pressure plate. Wemp suggests that levers mounted by separately formed brackets require connection to the pressure plate to deliver the centrifugal clamping force. The prior art of record lacks any contrary suggestion. It would not be presumed by those of ordinary skill that a retrofitted lever would be able to apply the necessary force without physical connection to the pressure plate.

Claims 18-20, 24-25, and new claim 53 depending directly or indirectly from claim 17, are submitted as unanticipated and patentable for the same reasons as claim 17.

New claim 53 depends from claim 17 and further comprises providing a spring mounted on the housing to provide resistance to the pivoting motion of the lever. Wemp and the other references of record fail to show or suggest this feature. Accordingly, claim 53 is allowable for this additional reason.

II. New Claims

New claim 47 corresponds to allowable claim 26 written in independent form. Accordingly, claim 47 is submitted as allowable.

New claim 48 corresponds to allowable claim 21 written in independent form. Accordingly, claim 48 is submitted as allowable.

New claim 49 is submitted as patentable over the prior art of record, including Wemp, in that none of the references show or suggest a method of converting a clutch into a centrifugally assisted clutch, the method having the steps recited in claim 49, namely:

- i) providing at least one centrifugal lever housing including a lever pivotable in the housing for applying a force to a pressure plate of the clutch;
- ii) forming an opening for the housing in the cover of the clutch;
- iii) inserting the housing in the opening; and
- iv) securing the housing as inserted in the opening to the cover.

It should be noted that the Wemp reference fails to show or suggest a method of converting a clutch assembly having the combination of steps recited in claim 49, including forming an opening for the housing in the cover of the clutch and inserting the housing in the opening. Wemp disclose an aperture 18 in the cover 3 for the pressure plate 15 and the lever 20 and a bracket 30 for mounting the lever, the bracket being attached to the cover plate by a threaded fastener (not numbered). The bracket 30 that mounts the lever 20 is not inserted or mounted in the aperture 18 in the cover plate 3. The claimed assembly method is far more efficient than that suggested by Wemp. Therefore, claim 49 is submitted as allowable over the prior art.

Claims 50-52 depend from claim 49 and are submitted as patentable over the prior art of record for the same reasons as claim 49. Claim 51 recites that the inserting the lever step comprises aligning the lever for contact with the spring. Claim 52 comprises providing a spring mounted on the housing to provide

resistance to the pivoting motion of the lever. Wemp and the other references of record fail to show or suggest these features.

III. Conclusion

Favorable consideration and allowance of claims 17-26 and 47-53 is respectfully requested.

Enclosed is a check for the payment of a one-month extension of time for filing this response. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-1345 in the name of Senniger Powers.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew N. Claerbout, Reg. No. 50,202
SENNIGER POWERS
One Metropolitan Square, 16th Floor
St. Louis, Missouri 63102
(314) 231-5400

ANC/KFJ/jmd

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